



Ebony and Crystal by Clark Ashton Smith

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As stated in L'Alouette: A Magazine of Verse, "Ebony and Crystal is an artist's intrepid repudiation of the world of trolleys and cash-registers, Freudian complexes and Binet-Simon tests, for realms of exalted and iridescent strangeness beyond space and time yet real as any reality because dreams have made them so. Mr. Smith has escaped the fetish of life and the world, and glimpsed the perverse, titanic beauty of death and the universe; taking infinity as his canvas and recording in awe the vagaries of suns and planets, gods, and daemons, and blind amorphous horrors that haunt gardens of polychrome fungi more remote than Algol and Achernar. It is a cosmos of vivid flame and glacial abysses that he celebrates, and the colorful luxuriance with which he peoples it could be born from nothing less than sheer genius.

The summation of Mr. Smith's exotic vision is perhaps attained in the long phantasmal procession of blank verse pentameters entitled, "The Hashish-Eater; or, the Apocalypse of Evil." In this frenzied plunge through nameless gulfs of interstellar terror the Californian presents a narcotic pageant of poisonous vermilion and paralysing shadows whose content is equalled only by its verbal medium; a medium involving one of the most opulent and fastidiously choice vocabularies ever commanded by a writer of English."

Clark Ashton Smith, referred to as one of the big three of Weird Tales, was a romantic-style poet, a Lovecraftian-style writer and a literary friend of H.P Lovecraft. As a poet, he was considered one of the last great West Coast Romantics. Ebony and Crystal, published in 1922, was Smith's last collection of pure poetry.

Read by Mike Pelton, Keith Louis, Thomas A. Copeland, Sandra Cullum, Damla Ozdemir, Anusha Iyer, Amy Gramour, S.A. Judasin, JudyDerby, Shakira Searle, Leonard Wilson, MaryAnnS, Harley James, nbvoices, and Jacquelyn Bengfort

**Total running time: 03:48:49**

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